# Letter from Taizé

BIMONTHLY 3.50 FF · £0.60 (UK) · $1 (US) FEBRUARY – MARCH 1987 / 1


**Bless us, O Christ, us and all those whom you entrust to us.....* Keep us in the spirit of the Beatitudes: joyful, simple and merciful.**


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# Living Springs

## A letter on the inner life

**Wherever you are across the continents, you vant so much to become aware of the mystery which ies deep in your heart; do you sense, even fleetingly, presence within you?**

**Perhaps with astonishment, you are discovering n the Risen Christ a meaning to life. Not a life of outine without any risks, but an overflowing measure. Perceiving an emptiness within you, you are ooking for the wellsprings of life.**

**You are aware of weak points in your trust in God, but days are coming when you will be able to say, "You, Christ, were in me, yet I was absent. You were always here, but I wasn't looking for you. Now, have discovered you, yet so often I forget you. But ou, Christ, you continue to love me. From the unathomed depths of my being, a fire was rising up to ake hold of me. I was burning for you to be everyhing in my life. I was calling to you, asking: you see ery well who I am, you see what I'm like, how can ou still love me and trust in me?** [1]

**And yet I understand: You, the Christ, you are the only way, I have o other."** [2]

**Face to face with the absolute ature of the Gospel, do you find ourself at a loss, as if God was sking too much?** [3]

**What God asks of you, he also ives.**

**When one is pulled in several irections at once, it is essential to tart again without putting off until ter: in the present moment, always daring to trust afresh, without ngering in the quicksand of one's esitations.** [4]

▷

It is in the inner life that answers to our questionings are prepared. "Living Springs" was written by Brother Roger just before the European Meeting in London, after visiting East Germany and Poland.
This letter was written not to be read just once, but to be meditated through this year when intercontinental meetings will be held in Taizé.

* In this prayer one can remember, silently or aloud, the names of those who are entrusted to us, and then continue, "Keep us...".

1 God says to everyone, "You are precious in my eyes, and I love you." (Isaiah 43.4)

2 There are days when we pray with almost nothing. In that emptiness Christ brings peace. Holding ourselves in silence is already prayer. Christ does not ask us to force our lips to speak.

3 Some, startled, are gripped by hesitation when they understand that God is asking of them a "yes" that commits their whole life. The Holy Spirit has already placed within us the "yes" that we say to God. God takes care of any element of mistake which our "yes" may contain. The one important thing is to be clearly aware that it is to Christ that we have answered a call.

4 For some people, anxiety about their jobless future paralyses any kind of trust in their own capacities and even in God.

**A telegram from the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Brother Roger:**

*"As International Peace Year draws to a close and as you are once again with a vast ecumencial gathering of thousands of young people in London, I would like them to know that at the United Nations we feel supported by their involvement and their prayer for peace and reconciliation.*
*I have a very clear memory of our meeting in Geneva and it is my hope that this new step in the admirable «Pilgrimage of trust on earth» which your community has fostered will help to bring us closer to the ideal of peace to which we all aspire, that peace which is no longer just a question of absence of war but which must be a humane peace which allows the development of life both material and spiritual.*
*While waiting to learn of the suggestions regarding this aim which the young people will make to the UN, I hope that their meeting in London will be a source of encouragement and satisfaction. My best wishes for success go with them in the quest for peace which is ours also.*
*Javier Perez de Cuellar"*

**One of the first believers said to Christ, "I believe; help my unbelief."** [5] **These two words are within us like the rising and falling of the waves on the ocean.**

**Understand this, for ever: neither doubts nor impressions that God is silent take his Holy Spirit away from you.** [6]

**You think you have nothing or almost nothing. "I know your afflictions and your poverty, yet you have plenty."** [7] **Through the Holy Spirit who dwells constantly in your heart, you have everything that is needed to advance, everything for an inner freedom aroused by trust in God to come to life within you.** [8]

**Christ could say to you as well, "I have shared in everything. I have experienced the goodness and generosity of the human heart. I encountered the Tempter more than once. I have also gone through being forsaken by my own friends. There are some who have walked with me and then abandoned me. And to one of them I said:... do you want to leave me too?"**

## *Joy*

**Welcome the coming day as irreplaceable and unique, the today in which God is present.** [9] **Look how to live it with a heart that trusts. The past is buried in God, and of the future he also takes care.** [10]

**In times of trial, search steadfastly to discover all that can light up our night. Gather up the events, however small, which awaken thankfulness and joy.**

**Remember that the presence of the Risen Christ cuts through the darkness: "Darkness is no darkness with you, the night sheds light like the day."** [11]

**When you do not understand what is happening to you and there are difficulties to be lived through, would you forget the inner joy offered by Christ who declared nine times over: "Happy..."?** [12]

**So by faith, the road which mounts up towards serene joy lies open to you, and you will build your dwelling in the lands of joyfulness.**

**"You Jesus, my joy, you give rest for my heart."**

**Perfect joy lies in transparency of heart. In order to shine out, such joy requires no less than your whole being. It awakens others to God; above all by what you are.**

5 Mark 9.24

6 It is not we who create an invisible communion with God, it is God who enters into communion with us. And he gives all human beings the possibility of being gathered together in him, in life and in death.

7 Revelation 2.9

8 When we live by faith, inner freedom gives rise to an inventiveness and makes us want to do all we can for the freedom of persons and peoples.

9 St Gregory of Nyssa writes: we go from "one beginning to another beginning, through beginnings that never come to an end."

10 God is never the author of torment within anyone. He gives inner peace. What dizzy anxiety if God tormented the human heart, keeping account of what each person is or is not! We would be imagining God to have manipulative designs, as if he willed to make human beings guilt-ridden. Whereas God suffers together with every person who is tormented.

11 Psalm 139.12

12 The Beatitudes
"Jesus said to the people,
Happy are the simple in heart: the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
Happy are the gentle: they will inherit the earth.
Happy are those who mourn: they shall be comforted.
Happy are those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be filled.
Happy are the merciful: they will have mercy shown to them.
Happy are the clear in heart: they will see God.
Happy are the peacemakers: they will be called children of God.
Happy are those who are persecuted because of their justice: the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
Happy are you when people abuse you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven."

13 Luke 19.1-10

14 Extract from Pope John Paul II's message to the community during his visit to Taizé 5th October 1986: "My desire is that the Lord may keep you like a springtime that blossoms and that he keep you little, in the joy of the Gospel and the transparency of brotherly love. Each of you came here to live in the mercy of God and the community of his brothers. In consecrating your whole being to Christ for love of him, you have found both of these. But in addition, although you did not look for it, you have seen young people from everywhere come to you by the thousands, attracted by your prayer and your community life. How can we not think that these young people are the gift and the means the Lord gives you to stimulate you to remain together, in the joy and freshness of your gift, as a springtime for all who are searching for true life? Throughout your days, work, rest, prayer, everything is quickened by the Word of God that takes hold of you, that keeps you little, in other words children of the heavenly Father, brothers and servants of all in the joy of the Beatitudes...
Christ gives a universal heart for us to be creators of justice and peace, able to unite to our contemplation a struggle along the lines of the Gospel for the integral liberation of human beings, of every human being and of the entire human being." (The complete text of the Pope's message is published in the Letter from Taizé Nov.-Dec. 1986.)

**Let Christ sing in you the radiant gift of life, to the point that the springs of jubilation never run dry.**

**Perfect joy is in the eagerness of the one who runs towards Christ Jesus.**

**One day, seeing that Zacchaeus had climbed up in a tree to watch him pass by, Jesus called to him: "Zacchaeus, come down! Hurry, for I have to stay at your house today." So Zacchaeus came down at once and welcomed him joyfully.** [13]

## *Simplicity*

**Let the simple of heart rejoice, happy are those who have the heart of a child! They have within them all the things of God.** [14]

**The Risen Christ breathes his Holy Spirit upon you and uncovers essential gifts within you: his forgiveness,** [15] **his presence, his trust.** [16]

**Happy the clear in heart, they will see God! "More than all else, keep watch over your heart, since here are the wellsprings of life."** [17]

**Simplicity without a burning love is like a dark shadow unrelieved by light. Simplicity of heart opens our eyes to the urgent needs of the family of humanity. It stimulates your concern for those who live in the anguish of poverty, for the victims of family break-ups, for those who live in loneliness, for those who are broken by humiliation or violence.** [18]

**To respond to these urgent needs, sharing between different parts of the world is essential.** [19] **Do you have the impression that your hands are empty, that you have no solution? Consenting to a simplicity of means will impel you to put everything to use and to discover your own inventiveness. And when you put your gifts to use, starting from the situations you encounter, little by little they will come to serve others widely.** [20]

**So it is when you welcome others: hospitality can be hindered rather than served by abundance.** [21] **Around your table a festive spirit will shine through in simplicity. A sense of sharing will lead you to make your home a place of peace and caring.** [22] **Being poor in spirit according to the Gospel means imaginatively arranging all things in the simple beauty of creation. It is incompatible with cold austerity.** [23] ▷

*15* According to some religions, in order to achieve forgiveness, people need to have recourse to long processes of expiation so as to set themselves right with God. The radical newness of the Gospel lies in its affirmation that God loves us first. It is God who gives human beings both a spirit of repentance in their hearts and also forgiveness. Some Christians, although they know the Gospel, sometimes fall back on a position which suggests itself naturally to the human heart and are tempted to try to achieve expiation by their actions. On the contrary, for many people, the sacrament of Reconciliation provides an answer: when it is received in a spirit of repentance, it liberates us from doubt and gives a personal certainty of God's forgiveness.

*16* Certain fundamental elements of the Gospel can sometimes become part of us by means of very simple songs comprising one short phrase sung over and over again. In a few words, they express a reality of the Gospel which is easily grasped by the mind and which gradually penetrates the whole being. For example: "God of all mercy, your forgiveness and your presence call forth within us songs of trusting and of gladness."

*17* Proverbs 4.23
Happy are those who, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, want to express their love to him also by a vigilance that concerns their whole being.

*18* In this second half of the twentieth century, perhaps as never before, Christians are working for solidarity and development in the human family. "The Church must in prophetic fashion denounce every form of poverty and oppression and defend and support everywhere the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person." (Synod 1985)

*19* In order to encourage sharing, we had thought of indicating certain development funds which are considered to be most sure. This has proved impossible. However, we would be able to propose very simple projects to the development funds.

*20* For several years, as a way of preparing ourselves to be people of peace, reconciliation and sharing in today's world, we have been involved with people (especially the young) from every continent in a "Pilgrimage of trust on earth".

*21* As early as the 4th century, a bishop, Ambrose of Milan, was deeply concerned when he saw how some Christians were accumulating wealth. He wrote to them, "It is in common, for all, that the earth was created. Nature knows no rich, she gives birth only to poor." The boundaries of injustice do not lie only between one country or continent and another but sometimes very close to where one lives. Even among one's neighbours one can see people who are cut off from others and a very unequal distribution of wealth.

*22* God entrusts to everyone one or several people. To a greater or lesser degree, many baptized Christians have in them a gift for apostolate. For some, it is the gift of listening to others in all that hurts them. So many people need to break out of their inner loneliness and be listened to and accompanied. Will the ministry of lay people, which is so essential today, make it possible for many people to know how to accompany others? Listening, not to express categorical directives, "you must...", but to help each person discover what God has prepared within them. The more one advances in age, the more intuition becomes sensitive, develops and can even understand almost without words being spoken those who come to confide.

**When simplicity is joined to a spirit of childhood, your heart becomes more human. A shaft of light falls on your path, and your song rises to God:**

**"You who give food to the birds of the air and make the lilies of the field to grow, enable us to rejoice in the things with which you fill us, and may that be enough for us."**

# *Mercy*

**In the Beatitudes of the Gospel, Christ Jesus reveals a happiness to you: Happy are the merciful. Yes, joy to them. Merciful love is a deep kind-heartedness which allows Christ himself to shine through you. Like nothing else, it draws you towards the mysterious presence of the Risen One, the "Christ of communion", who is always in all his fullness in the mystery of communion of his Body, the Church.**

**In that communion, you are part of a multitude of women, men, young people and children in all parts of the earth who want to be bearers of Christ, to be his witnesses. If you could only pray, with many of them, "O God, in the steps of the witnesses to Christ of every age, from Mary and the Apostles onwards, enable me, day by day, to prepare myself within to trust in the Mystery of the Faith."** [24]

**The upheavals of change press at an increasing pace upon every part of the earth. Humanity is still caught up in the pangs of its own birth, and Christians are not exempt. Yet on every continent a springtime of the Church is approaching, together with the frosts and the squalls that always usher in the spring.** [25]

**And the springtime is already apparent wherever the spirit of mercy humanizes our heart in the light of compassionate love.** [26] **And that kindles a fire in our heart: even under the ashes there will always be an ember burning.**

**Merciful love - love that forgives, presence of the Risen Christ - a narrow way and a way of fullness.**

**And you will surprise yourself by telling Christ: I want to give you much, I want to give everything, but it seems as if I give you very little. Yet you know I love you, not as I would like to, but I do love you.**

*23* Simplifying and sharing do not mean adopting a severe attitude which sits in judgement without any understanding or kindness. Nor do they mean an exaltation of poverty and suffering. The same measure of simplification cannot be demanded of the elderly who cannot change their life and whose homes are full of souvenirs of the past. In old age, intuitions of God well up which are a source of encouragement to those who listen to them. Indeed, old people are so precious in the life of the Church.

*24* As a baptized Christian, if you have been indifferent to Christ and his Church, and want to follow him from now on, you can be sure of this: They are already in his communion, those who want to live out an intention such as this: "O God, in the steps of the witnesses to Christ of every age, from Mary and the Apostles onwards, enable me, day by day, to prepare myself within to trust in the Mystery of the Faith." (Of course, not just in the parts that we understand but in the whole Mystery of Faith, without any levelling of values. What one person does not understand, another does and lives from it. And vice versa.)

*25* "Perhaps we are not free from all responsibility for the fact that young people, in particular, regard the Church critically as a mere institution. Have we not put the idea into their heads by talking too much about reforming external Church structures and too little about God and Christ?
The Church becomes more credible if it speaks less about itself and more and more preaches Christ crucified (cf. 1 Cor 2.2) and witnesses to him by its life...
Just as we believe in one God, in one only mediator Jesus Christ, in one Spirit, we have also one baptism and one eucharist, by which the unity and uniqueness of the Church are signified and built up. This is of special importance in our time because the Church, as one and unique, is a kind of sacrament, that is, a sign and instrument of unity, of reconciliation and peace among people, nations, classes and races...
Because the Church is a communion, the new so-called "Basic Communities", if they genuinely live in the unity of the Church, are a true expression of communion and an instrument for fashioning a more profound communion. They thus offer great hope for the life of the Church." (Synod 1985)

*26* It is still good to refer to the text published last year, the "Letter to a small community" which begins: "If it is rooted in the wider local church community, a small, provisional community can be capable of taking risks and of resisting the inertia of discouragement. Even a very few people, three at the least, ten at the most, suffice for such a community to be a living sign of Christ, he who gathers us together in order for us to go towards all of humanity. The Church is a mystery of communion which begins right there where one lives." Of course, the creation of small basic communities does not mean distancing oneself from the Church or criticizing from outside. Every fine reality has its reverse side – like a medal. The reverse side of a small community is that when a few people have so chosen each other, the catholicity of the Gospel, the sense of universality, can easily be lost. The "Letter to a small community" goes on: "If small provisonal communities went, at least once a week, to join the prayer of the local church community and there was a celebration that gathers people of all ages including children and old people, it would help us to sense the universality of our communion together".

# Letter to someone abandoned in childhood

**You are overcome by doubt and you don't manage to trust in the Living God, abandoned as you were by one of those whom God entrusted you to at birth.**

**There's a hollow emptiness inside you that you can't fill up. And now it's as if you wanted to run and run again to find a chance of life, a father..., or a mother.**

**When your heart is dying of rejection, when the depths cry out in solitude, when inside you wells up the ultimate question: But where is God? Then, perhaps you are unaware: For God, you are sacred, yes, consecrated by the wounded innocence of your youth.**

**If you could write what wounds you to an elderly person, they would pray for you and entrust you to the Spirit of God.**

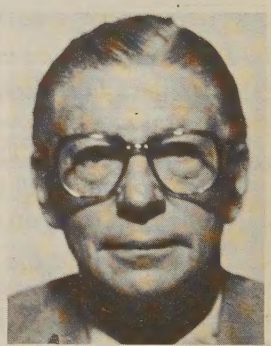
**And one day will come for you the boldness to forgive the one who deserted you, and through forgiveness, a beginning of resurrection on earth.**

# Award of the Gandhi prize

During the European Meeting in London, on the evening of January 1st 1987, Brother Roger explained how the Gandhi prize had originated:

"A year ago, while I was in a poor neighbourhood of Madras, on Christmas Eve, I thought to myself — right across the world there are humble people, very often unseen and unknown who are doing all they can to build up trust between humans, to foster reconciliations and to work for an equitable sharing of wealth. To express symbolically a gratitude to some of these people, with whom many can identify, the idea came up of a prize bearing the name of the Mahatma Gandhi. The prize does not comprise any money. It is simply a confirmation written on paper which is presented by children, together with some fine children's drawings."

In London, a young man from Haiti read these words about the two people chosen for the 1987 Gandhi prize, and a child announced their names.



## Teresita Nitorreda (Philippines)

In Manila, Teresita Nitorreda has spent all her life among young people, often marked by poverty and unemployment, and prey to discouragement and indifference. She does all she can for them to become people who build up the family of humanity. Without imposing herself on the young by watch-words and instructions, very simply she knows how to suggest and to listen. In February 1986, she supported the crowds of women who came out into the streets and sat down in the face of the army, thereby preventing the soldiers from firing upon husbands and young people. Teresita Nitorreda was among those who were in the forefront so that, without bloodshed, change could be brought about in her country.

## Christian Beyers Naude (South Africa)

A citizen of South Africa, Christian Beyers Naude gives the finest of himself for human dignity to be respected in his country. As a white, he understood at a certain moment in his life that he had to become a person of reconciliation in the face of racial segregations. He was eventually "banned" because of this choice: stripped of his civic rights, he was shut in his home for seven years without being able to leave. This man of reconciliation has never wished to use violence, he has preferred to give himself. He is one of those who are ready to devote all their energy to avoid the shedding of blood in South Africa. Recently he said, "In my heart there is not a single bit of hatred towards anyone."


## Letter from Taizé

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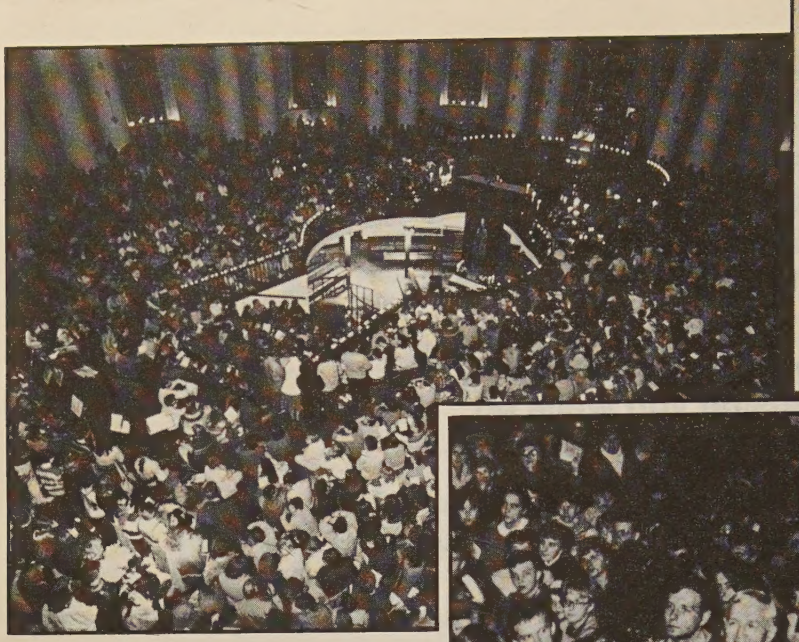

• Recently, meetings in the same spirit as the European Meeting in London brought together thousands of young adults in Eastern Europe. Brother Roger was present in both East Berlin and Warsaw.

▲▲ In East Berlin, the prayer took place simultaneously in the Catholic and Protestant cathedrals.
◀ In Warsaw, meetings were held in two churches of the city.

## Intercontinental Meetings in Taizé – Summer 1987

*Following the first intercontinental meeting which took place in Madras in December 1985, intercontinental meetings will be held in Taizé during the summer of 1987. They will be like places where living springs well up to help us pursue the "Pilgrimage of trust on earth".*

*Because of the large number of people who have already indicated that they wish to attend, these meetings will be spread out through the whole summer, from 29 June to 13 September. Every week, Sunday to Sunday, a meeting which includes young adults from different continents will be held.*

*It is in the inner life that answers to our questionings are prepared: many people will stay for two or three weeks in order to deepen their reflexion, and in silence and prayer seek the will of God and his way for each person.*

*Among the most important questions which will be dealt with:*

- *What can we do so that our suggestions to the U.N., for sharing and for peace, can be fulfilled in practice in our own lives too?*
- *How can we, either alone or with others, in community, for example, deepen our search for an inner life so that within us there is built up a solid reference which will remain all through our lives?*

### An East-West meeting in Yugoslavia

For many years, young people from Eastern Europe have been coming to Taizé meetings. For many years too Brother Roger and a few brothers have been to take part in meetings in Eastern Europe like those held recently in East Berlin and Warsaw, but without people from Western Europe being invited.

This year, it is possible for the first time to hold a meeting in Eastern Europe to which young adults from the West can also come. Numbers will be limited, therefore those who would like to take part must arrange this with Taizé.

The East-West meeting will be held 2-3 May 1987 in Yugoslavia in the city of Ljubljana.

### Further contacts with the UN

After the intercontinental meetings of summer 1987 at Taizé, the suggestions concerning the United Nations will be summed up. Together with five children, from the five different continents, Brother Roger will then go to meet the Secretary-General of the UN, Mr Perez de Cuellar, to hand over the suggestions. It is on the basis of these suggestions that meetings will continue with those whom the UN designates for this purpose.

### • A telegram from Pope John Paul II for the London European Meeting

"The Holy Father asks you kindly to transmit following message to Brother Roger and young people attending London Taizé gathering, 29 December to 2 January. Following his welcome to a similar gathering in Rome and his visit to Taizé, Pope John Paul II earnestly exhorts the young people gathered in London to pray for reconciliation among Christians and peace among all people. He prays that they will draw from the spring of living water promised by Christ and know the full joy of his presence in order to bear generous witness before the world to his love. Thus they will help to lead all Christians into fraternal trust and unreserved openness. His Holiness asks the Saviour to confirm all of you in fidelity and to grant you his abundant blessings."

# Febuary

**20 Fri** Ex 40.36-38 / Mt 12.1-14
Paul wrote: Keep as your pattern he sound teaching you have eard from me, in the faith and ve that are in Christ Jesus. With he help of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, look after that pre-ious thing given in trust.
**2 Tim 1.9b-14**

**21 Sat** Mt 12.15-21
Trust in God with all your heart, do ot rely upon your own under-standing. **Proverbs 3.3-7**

**22 SUN** Leviticus 19.1-2,17-18 / **Mt 5.38-48**
Paul wrote: All things are yours, ut you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.
1 Cor 3.16-23

**23 Mon** 2 Tm 2.1-7 . Pr 3.27-31 / **Mt 12.22-30**
God is the saving of the righteous; e is their stronghold in time of rouble. He saves them because hey take refuge in him.
Ps 37.39-40

**24 Tue** 2 Tm 2.8-13 / Mt 12.33-42
The path of the upright is like the ight of dawn whose brightness in-reases to the full light of day.
**Pr 4.18,20-27**

**25 Wed** Pr 8.22-31 / **2 Tm 2.14-24**
Jesus said: Anyone who does the vill of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.
Mt 12.46-50

**26 Thu** Pr 16.19-32 . 2 Tm 3.10-17 / **Mt 13.1-9**
Examine me, Lord, test my heart nd my mind; for your faithful love s before my eyes, and I live my life by your truth. Ps 26

**27 Fri** Pr 23.15-18 / Mt 13.10-11,16-17
Paul wrote: Proclaim the Word, in season and out of season.
**2 Tim 4.1-8**

**28 Sat** Pr 30.5-9
Jesus said in a parable: The seed which was sown in good soil is someone who hears the Word and understands it. That person bears fruit. **Mt 13.18-23**

*These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.*

# March

**1 SUN** Isaiah 49.14-15 / **Matthew 6.24-34**
Paul wrote: Do not judge anything before the due time; wait until the Lord comes. 1 Corinthians 4.1-5

**2 Mon** **Job 1.20-22** / 2 Thessalonians 1.1-5
Jesus said: The seed which was sown in the good earth is like a person who hears the Word and understands it; that person bears fruit. Mt 13.18-23

**3 Tue** Jb 2.1-10 / **Mt 13.24-30**
Paul wrote: May God fulfil every good purpose of yours by his power, and complete all that you have been doing through faith.
2 Th 1.11-2.3a

**4 Wed** Joël 2.12-18 / 2 Cor 5.20-6.2
ASH WEDNESDAY
Jesus said: When you give, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your generosity will be secret. And your Father, who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.
**Mt 6.1-6,16-18**

**5 Thu** Jb 6.11-21 / **2 Th 2.13-17**
Jesus said: The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. Of all seeds it is the smallest, yet, once it has grown it is the biggest of plants and becomes a tree. Mt 13.31-35

**6 Fri** Jb 12.4-5, 13.1-8 / **Mt 13.44-48,51-52**
Paul wrote: The Lord is faithful, he will give you strength and protect you from the evil one. 2 Th 3.1-5

**7 Sat** **Jb 16.16-22** / Mt 13.53-58
I want to do your will, my God, your law is deep in my heart.
Ps 40

**8 SUN** Genesis 2.7-9, 3.1-7 / Romans 5.17-19
Jesus said to the tempter: Away with you! For scripture says: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only." **Mt 4.1-11**

**9 Mon** James 1.1-6 / **Mt 14.13-21**
Job said: I know that my redeemer lives. Jb 19.23-27

**10 Tue** Jb 23.3-12 / **Jm 1.12-17**
Coming towards his disciples, walking on the water, Jesus said to them: Courage! It is I. Do not be afraid! Mt 14.22-36

# Meditating on

**11 Wed** Jb 28.12-28 / Mt 15.21-31
Humbly welcome the Word which has been planted in you and which can give you life. **Jm 1.18-21**

**12 Thu** Jb 42.1-5 / Mt 16.1-12
James wrote: Do not only listen to the Word: put it into practice.
**Jm 1.22-25**

**13 Fri** Jeremiah 1.4-10 / **Mt 16.13-20**
God chose those who were poor according to the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him. Jc 2.1-5

**14 Sat** **Mt 16.21-28**
The Lord says: I watch over my word to see it fulfilled.
Jr 1.11-12,17-19

**15 SUN** 2 Timothy 1.8-10 / **Mt 17.1-9**
The Lord said to Abraham: "Leave your country, your kinsfolk and your father's house, for the land which I will show you." And Abraham set out, as the Lord had said. Gn 12.1-4

**16 Mon** Jr 2.1-5 / Mt 17.14-20
James wrote: As a body without a spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. **Jm 2.12-26**

**17 Tue** Jm 3.4-5,7-11 / Mt 17.22-27
The Lord said of his people: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, cracked cisterns that cannot hold water.
**Jr 2.10-13**

**18 Wed** Jm 3.12-17 / Jm 3.13,16-18
Jesus said: Truly, I tell you, if you do not change and become like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. **Mt 18.1-5**

**19 Thu** Jr 6.14-16 / Mt 18.10-14
James wrote: Give yourselves to God. Resist the tempter and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you. **Jm 4.4-12**

**20 Fri** Jr 7.1-7 / **Mt 18.15-18**
Hold firmly to your hope, for the Lord's coming is near. Do not complain against one another, so as not to be brought to judgement yourselves. Jm 5.7-9a

**21 Sat** Jr 7.22-25
Peter asked Jesus: "How many times should I forgive my brother? Up to seven times?" Jesus replied: "Not seven times, I tell you, but seventy-seven times."
**Mt 18.19-22**

# the word

**22 SUN** Exodus 17.3-7 / **John 4.5-42**
Our hope will not disappoint us, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.
Rm 5.1-2,5-8

**23 Mon** Jr 8.4-7 / Jm 5.10-16
Jesus told a parable in which the master says to his servant: All of your debt to me I cancelled when you appealed to me. Were you not bound then to have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you? **Mt 18.23-35**

**24 Tue** Jr 8.18-23 / **Mt 19.13-22**
At many times in the past, and by many means, God spoke to our ancestore through the prophets; but in our time, the final days, he has spoken to us by his Son.
Hebrews 1.1-3

**25 Wed** Jr 9.22-23 He 2.10-18 / **Mt 19.23-26**
Elizabeth said to Mary: Blessed is she who has believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled. Luke 1.39-45

**26 Thu** Jr 11.19, 12.1-3a / **Mt 19.27-30**
Encourage one another daily, so that none of you become hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly to the end the confidence we had at first. He 3.5-14

**27 Fri** He 4.12-16 / **Mt 20.1-16**
You are our hope, Lord; you are in our midst, and we are called by your name. Jr 14.7-9

**28 Sat** Jr 14.19-22 / **Mt 20.17-23**
With thankfulness on my lips, I will praise the Lord before all the people. For he stands at the side of the poor to save their lives from those who condemn them.
Ps 109.21-31

**29 SUN** 1 Samuel 16.6-7,10-13 / Jn 9.1-41
You have become light in the Lord: live as children of the light.
**Ephesians 5.8-14**

**30 Mon** Jr 15.11-21 / He 5.5-9
Jesus said: The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life for the forgiveness of many. **Mt 20.24-28**

**31 Tue** He 6.10-20 / Mt 20.29-34
Blessed is the person who puts all his trust in the Lord. He is like a tree which is planted by the water. In a year of drought it is untroubled and never ceases to bear fruit.
**Jr 17.5-8**

# April

**1 Wed** — Hebrews 7.22-25 / Matthew 21.1-11
Heal me, Lord, and I shall be healed, save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise.
Jeremiah 17.14-17

**2 Thu** — Jr 18.1-6 / **Mt 21.12-17**
The Lord says: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds. He 10.14-18

**3 Fri** — He 10.22-25 / **Mt 21.28-32**
Jeremiah said: The word of the Lord has been the cause of insult and derision for me. I would say to myself, "I will not think about him, I will not speak in his name any more. But it was as if there was a fire shut up in my bones that I could not contain. Jr 20.7-9

**4 Sat** — **Mt 22.1-10**
The Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue those who are wronged from the hands of their oppressors. Jr 22.1-3

**5 SUN** — Ezekiel 37.12-14 / **John 11.1-45**
The One who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you. Romans 8.8-11

**6 Mon** — **Jr 29.11-14** / He 10.32-38a
Jesus said: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind and with all your soul. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second resembles it: Love your neighbour as yourself. Mt 22.31-40

**7 Tue** — Jr 31.8-9 / Mt 23.1-4,8-11
Faith is the assurance of the things we hope for and the certainty of realities that are unseen.
**He 11.1-10**

**8 Wed** — Jr 31.15-20 / **He 11.13-16**
Jesus said: Truly I tell you, in so far as you did good to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me. Mt 25.34-40

**9 Thu** — Jr 31.31-34 / **Mt 26.1-13**
Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin which so easily entangles to run the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection.
He 11.35b-12.3

**10 Fri** — Jr 32.38-41 / He 12.28-13.8
Jesus said: I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.
**Jn 10.11-18**

# Meditating on the word

**11 Sat** — Jr 33.2-3,6-8
Jesus said to his disciples: Now you are sad, but I shall see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy, and that joy no one shall take from you. **Jn 16.16-22**

**12 SUN** — Zechariah 9.9-10 / Mt 21.1-11
PALM SUNDAY Taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness, Christ Jesus was humbler still, to the point of accepting death, death on a cross. And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names. **Philippians 2.6-11**

**13 Mon** — Luke 22.47-71
When they reached the Mount of Olives, Jesus said to his disciples: Pray, so as not to fall into temptation. **Lk 22.24-34,39-46**

**14 Tue** — Lk 23.1-25
On the cross, Jesus cried out with a loud voice: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
**Mt 27.31-61**

**15 Wed** — Lk 23.39-56
On the cross, Jesus said: Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing. **Lk 23.26-38**

**16 Thu** — Mark 14.10-25 / 1 Corin 11.23-26
Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, having loved those who were his in the world, now showed the full extent of his love.
**Jn 13.1-15**

**17 Fri** — Jn 19.1-16
Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and, carrying his own cross he went out to the place called Golgotha, where they crucified him.
**Jn 19.17-42**

**18 Sat** — Mt 27.62-66 / Job 19.25-26
In the Spirit, Christ went to announce the Gospel even to those who, long ago, had not believed.
**1 Peter 3.18-22**

**19 SUN** — **Jn 20.1-9** / Jn 20.19-23
EASTER From now on, your life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will appear with glory. Colossians 3.1-4

**20 Mon** — Acts 3.1-10 / Col 1.1-6
While two disciples were on their way to Emmaus, talking together about all that had happened, Jesus himself came up and walked with them. **Lk 24.13-27**

**21 Tue** — Ac 3.13-15,17-21 / Col 1.9-14
Having recognized the Risen Christ, the disciples at Emmaus set out that moment and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven, who said to them, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" **Lk 24.28-34**

**22 Wed** — Ac 5.27-33 / Jn 1.43-51
God wanted all fullness to be found in Christ, and through him to reconcile all things to himself.
**Col 1.15-20**

**23 Thu** — Col 1.21-23 / Jn 2.1-11
Glad to have had the honour of suffering for the name of Christ, the first diciples went on ceaselessly teaching and proclaiming the good news of Christ Jesus, both in the temple and in people's homes. **Ac 5.34,38-42**

**24 Fri** — **Ac 6.12-15, 7.55-60** / Col 1.24-29
The Risen Christ said to Mary of Magdala: Go and find my brothers and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. Jn 20.11-18

**25 Sat** — **1 Peter 5.5b-14**
ST MARK Jesus said to the Apostles: Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Gospel to all creation. Mk 16.15-20

**26 SUN** — 1 Peter 1.3-9 / **Jn 20.24-31**
The believers held everything in common; selling their goods and property they shared the proceeds according to each person's needs.
Ac 2.42-47

**27 Mon** — Ezekiel 1.28-2.5 / Jn 2.13-22
Paul wrote: In the mystery of Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.
**Col 2.1-5**

**28 Tue** — Col 2.6-10 / **Jn 3.1-8**
God said to Ezekiel: Son of man, take to heart everything I say to you, listen carefully, then go to your exiled countrymen and speak to them. Ez 3.10-11,15-18

**29 Wed** — Ez 11.17-20 / **Jn 3.13-17**
Paul wrote: You were dead because of your sins, but God has made you alive with Christ. He has forgiven us all our sins.
Col 2.12-14

**30 Thu** — Col 2.16-23 / **Jn 21.1-14**
The Lord said to his people: I will reestablish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am God. In your confusion you will be reduced to silence when I forgive you for everything you have done.
Ez 16.60-63

## Lent
## A Time for Conversion

Ash Wednesday begins with reading on the theme of conversion of heart (Joel 2,12-18). I speaking about conversion, th main image used by the Scriptures is that of a returning. "Return t the Lord, your God," exclaims Joe (2,13), and the prophet Jeremia employs the same language (Je 3,12; 15,19; 31,18). This return t God has nothing to do with backward movement, with a re gression, as we would say today For these prophets, returnin means instead rediscovering in deeper way the identity of the Lord, "God of tenderness an compassion, abounding in love merciful" (Joel 2,13b; Jer 3,12).

In other words, returning meann setting out once again on God' road, following the "good way (Jer 6,16), the way of happiness (cf. Jer 7,23). These dynamic im ages remove all ambiguity fron the idea of conversion as a return Similarly, the book of Job speak of searching for the way of wis dom (Job 28,12-18). For Job, con version means the move from try ing to justify himself to the discov ery of a superior order, accessibl only by an act of trust. Elsewher (Job 23), Job speaks of his unre lenting search for God. That i another way of speaking abou conversion, used also b Jeremiah: "You will seek me an find me when you seek me with a your heart" (Jer 29,13). To suc ceed, conversion, has to begin i the very depths of the huma being; it cannot simply be confor mity to an outward model. Joe said that it was necessary to "ren [his] heart, and not [his] garments (Joel 2,13).

The New Testament uses thes same images to speak of conver sion, and adds some new ones The Letter of James sees conver sion as constantly welcoming int one's life the Word "planted i you" (James 1,21). This welcom means trying to put the messag heard into practice at once (James 1,22-25; 2,14-26). James is ex tremely attentive to the dimensio of continuity implicit in faith. Con version is not a once-and-for-a reality: it may sometimes begi with a spectacular event, but thi event must then penetrate th warp and woof of daily life. That i why the Biblical authors em phasize perseverance so muc (James 5,10-11).

The Gospel according t Matthew offers other images o conversion. One is found in tw short parables, the treasure an the pearl (Matt 13,44-46). Conver sion of heart is a joyful act b which we risk everything in orde to find true happiness. An Matthew speaks also of spiritua childhood (Matt 18,1-5; 19,13-15 Conversion means, finally, "be coming like a little child".